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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
2 October 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Venezuelan Crackdown on Terrorist Leaders

1. The arrest of Venezuelan extremist leaders following the killing of five national guardsmen on 29 September appears to be the beginning of a nationwide crackdown on terrorist leadership but there is no evidence that stepped-up military measures are being contemplated against terrorist bands or strongholds.

2. To date, eight congressmen have been placed under house arrest, fifteen others are being sought and 146 Communists and leftists were arrested at a labor union meeting. In addition, several leftist newspapers have been prevented from operating.

4. Betancourt's crackdown has been one of his strongest measures since the beginning of terrorist activities three years ago. In earlier steps he suspended the political activities of the Communist Party and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left

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(MIR) by decree on 10 May 1962, and subsequently presented a request to the Supreme Court on 15 October 1962 that the legality of these parties be cancelled. The decision has not yet been handed down.

5. Betancourt has been very reluctant to use massive force against the terrorists for fear of being labeled dictatorial.

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